

ELOPEMENTS & LATEST FAD CUPID

Indiana Town Forty Five Miles From Chicago, Offers Chance to Evade Law Regarding Divorces--Crown Point Is Mecca for Auto Elopers. Justice Wedded Pair in Flying Motor Car.

DAN CUPID'S victims must needs run quickly when they do run, and the automobile elopement has come to the front with a flash. Angry parents are prone to follow, and there is nothing like the "third clutch" or top speed of a big touring car to reach a justice of the peace or an accomodating parson in a hurry.

In the olden days when gallants all carried swords and powdered their hair, they eloped on horseback and held the lady on the crupper. Then they fled in coaches; then the railroad came along and off they went on that.

Chicago keeps moving pretty fast for fear she'll stick in a rut and become like the effete East and out there is where the automobile elopement was invented and has its being.

Just across the line in Indiana is the town of Crown Point. It's only forty-one miles away, just long enough to get up one's appetite for little suppers, and besides it's out of reach of a law unpopular with some because it forbids the remarriage of divorced persons until a year after the decree has been granted. The statute books of Indiana on the other hand can boast no such prohibition, and Crown Point is glad.

Four Auto Elopements Daily.

Crown Point averages four automobiles every day that daily drive up to the court house and drop anchor there while the blushing brides-elect and the mainly bridegrooms-to-be rush up the steps to the place where they are having the remnant sale of marriage licenses.

Indiana merely writes its poetry, its fables, its slang, and its plays, but its romance it manufactures. For almost every couple that rushes into Clerk Wheeler's office and begs for a marriage license is putting the finishing touches on a thrilling love story that is soon to end with the beautiful words, "And they lived happily ever after." Not all, for some of these romances, which only begin at Crown Point and the big story comes in the subsequent proceedings.

Romance Seen in Streets.

Sometimes a few of the pages of the thrilling romance unfold to the curious gaze of Crown Point boomers, who spend the summer afternoons sitting in the square betting nickels and cigars whether the next bride will be a blonde or a brunette. Every now and then part of the romance arrives behind the lovers in the shape of a pursuing automobile.

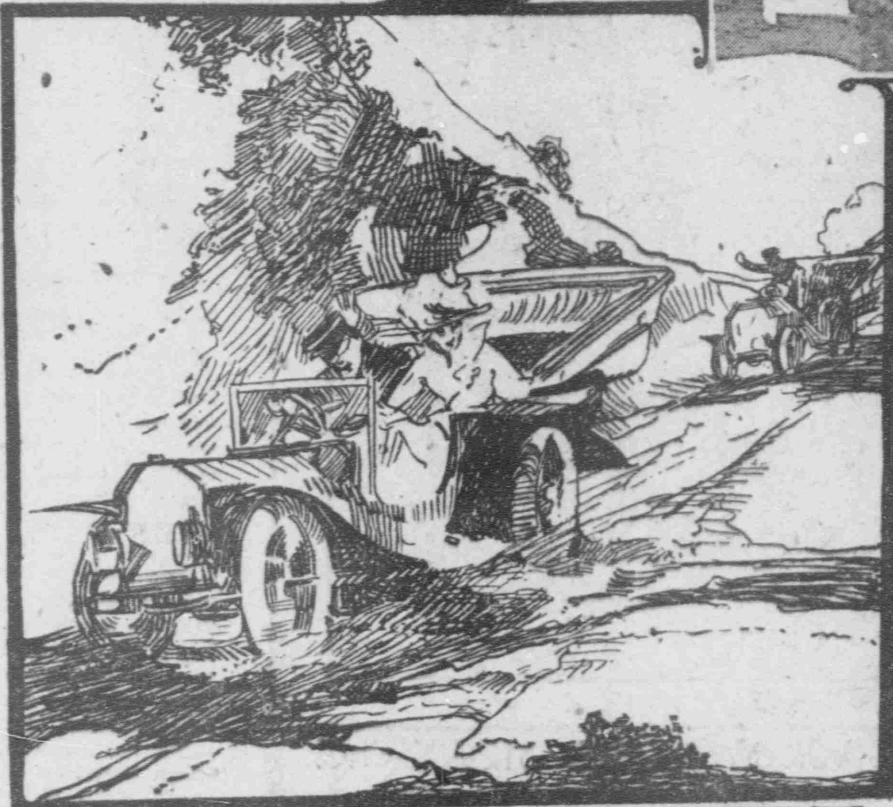
That's the trouble with automobiles, they'll go faster than a horse and

where a train or a steamboat can't go, but other automobiles can come after them and bring elopers back.

Three hundred and fifty marriage licenses have been given out in Crown Point since the first of May this year. Sometimes as many as thirty licenses are issued in one day and Justice of the Peace George Fisher expects to see the total number of licenses this year reach 2,500, which means that 7,000 hearts have been made happy or unhappy. And that's going some for a town of 5,000 inhabitants, including men who are poor, school children, and other persons not eligible to matrimony.

"Auto Elopements Quite Correct."

"Automobile elopements are the latest fad, and quite correct," says Justice of the Peace Fisher, and he knows, for he had a job in the office of the clerk of the court and will issue you a marriage license, and before the ink is dry turn around and



THE ELOPEMENT WIFE PAPA IN PURSUIT.

marry you. "Those elopers who wish to get married, come if you will, as we say in Crown Point, come down here for the ceremony."

"Of course, it isn't everybody who can afford to hire an automobile, but for those who can it's the only way. We have, of course, a large number who come down here on the trains, but it is the automobile marriage license trade which belongs to us exclusively that gives our beautiful little city its chief distinction."

Crown Point in the natural capital of automobile elopement land. It is the nearest Indiana town to Chicago, where a license can be procured, and is the county seat of Lake County. It is easy to run out to Crown Point, either by train or automobile, get a license, be married and run back early in the evening to Chicago.

Lives by Motoring.

Crown Point is a hustling place. The principal industries are marriage licenses, weddings, selling gasoline to the elopement automobiles, hauling elopers to and from trains, serving meals to wedding parties and selling "We Have Just Been Married" souvenir postal cards to blushing brides.

Although Crown Point is an Indiana town to its great shame and grief it had no poets, no Hoosier dialect writers, no historical novelists. It looked like if fame had given the town the go-by. Then fate began working for Crown Point.

The Illinois Legislature passed the law that people divorced in Illinois could not remarry within one year. It is said, but true that divorced people generally wish to remarry and usually without waiting a day, let alone a year. So naturally people in Chicago and northern Illinois generally who are divorced and wish to remarry within a year must go to some State that has more liberal laws on the subject. Of all these States Indiana is the most agreeable.

As the license must be given out at

a county seat, then, of course, the county seat in Indiana that is nearest to Chicago and northern Illinois will catch all those loving souls who wish to marry and who are under the ban of their own State. That town happens to be Crown Point, the metropolis of Lake County, Indiana, the latest Greenback, and only genuine home of Dan Cupid, Esq.

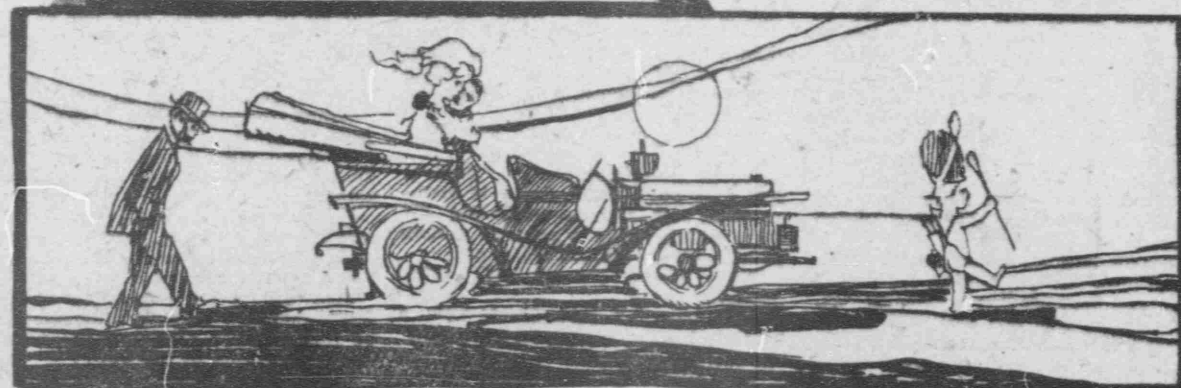
Gave 'Em' Framed With Tea.

Lake County, Indiana, has been the mecca for eloping couples for several years. Lake County, Indiana, is the original place where marriage licenses were once so common that they gave one all nicely framed with every pound of tea. Everywhere else in the United States of America there is only one place in each county, whether in Maine or Texas, where marriage licenses can be procured—that is the county seat. But in Lake County marriage licenses could be secured not only in Crown Point, the county seat, but at Hammond, which is the prosperous ball-wick abounding and abutting on the Illinois line, and only a short spin by automobile from South Chicago. Licenses were so common in Lake County that elopers generally went there with the impression that they could buy them of the candy butcher on the cars when the train crossed the county line.

Two Marriage License Centers.

How Lake County came to have two marriage license dispensaries came about in a peculiar manner. County Clerk Harold H. Wheeler, of Lake County, has held that office for nine years, although he has been connected with the county clerk's office in other capacities since the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. County Clerk Wheeler was made also clerk of the superior court of Indiana when a branch of that tribunal was established in Hammond.

Being part of his time each day at



TOWED HOME BY DAN CUPID.

usually their eyes, being fixed straight ahead, fall upon the large gilt sign of:

MARRIED IN FLYING AUTO.

writer's cramp filling in the record blanks in the marriage license book. A night shift had to be put on and the office was never closed.

The ministers and justices of the peace at Hammond did a big business. On these occasions, owing to the lack of proper precautions, accidents often occur. The principal societies which take an interest in and encourage this form of sport take precautions to avoid accidents, but irresponsible persons having balloons in charge are very apt to neglect them.

The question of the danger from lightning experienced by a free balloon has become a very serious one, owing to the great number of ascensions made nowadays, a number which is continually increasing year by year.

The earliest record of an aeronaut's experience in a thunder storm is that of the French scientist, Testu Bressy. On May 11, 1780, while studying the electrical condition of the atmosphere, this experimenter made an eleven-hour night journey and remained for three hours in thunder clouds conducting his observations. He noticed several times on the iron points of the basket the

well-known phenomenon of St. Elmo's fire.

John Wise, the noted American balloonist, gives an exciting description of his experiences in a storm during an ascent made on June 17, 1843. The balloon, as it came under a black cloud, began to rotate and to ascend rapidly. On entering the cloud Wise experienced a sensation of suffocation, and had repeated attacks of vomiting.

In consequence of the great cold the ropes were covered with ice and snow fell. The balloon was whirled about and rose rapidly, roaring noise like those of a cataract resounding in the air. The balloon was sent alternately up and down several times with great rapidity. After about twenty minutes it was finally thrown out of the cloud.

Captain Hildebrand, of the German army, had a similar experience when he made an ascent on June 7, 1902, with the director of the photographic laboratory of the Technical High School of Charlottenburg, Prof. Miethe. At 6:30 p. m., near Falkenberg, the bal-

loon had the towline out, but to avoid injuring the cultivated fields, a landing was not effected. The balloon soon reached Nieder-Finow, and then the place was found.

Ballast was thrown out, and the balloon rose a few hundred yards and entered an apparently harmless, low-lying cloud. Suddenly the balloon began to rise very rapidly and a peculiar rushing noise became audible, as if there were a waterfall down below in the woods.

Hall fell into the basket from all sides. Three times the balloon was hurled rapidly from a height of about 400 yards to 2,400 yards and down again. The towline stood out straight, nearly on a level with the basket, and the latter was thrown about so violently that the inmates had to hold on with both hands. The storm itself forced the gas out of the ventilator at a rapid rate, so that opening the ventilator had no effect.

Little lightning was noticed, but the of names in his records and mentions interesting details of the various romances wound around every name inscribed there.

"Here's Pierson W. Jennings and Mary A. Cody," says Justice Nicholson, stopping his finger on these names. "He was seventy-five and she was fifty-five. She is a niece of Buffalo Bill and had been married five times previous to her marriage with Jennings. Three of her former husbands died and she was divorced from the other two."

"Here's Joe Howard and Mabel Barrison. You know them. Actor people. They thought they could get a marriage license at Hammond, but the bureau there had been moved the day before. They didn't care, though. They were in a big touring car and they came right over to Crown Point."

There are a lot of other interesting names in the book, among them being George W. Lederer, now manager of the Colonial Theater, Chicago, who married Miss Irene Davis, an actress.

500 Weddings This Year.

Justice of the Peace Nicholson is one of the captains of industry in the marriage business of Crown Point. His office is just across the street from the front door of the courthouse. As the happy couple step out into the sunlight from the dark corridors of the courthouse they stop for a moment to scan the precious document that the county clerk has just given them. As they raise their eyes, of course, they look fondly at each other. Then the groom-to-be smiles happily and says: "Now, the next thing is to find a justice or a preacher."

They start down the steps and nat-

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Special Clerk for Licenses.

Justice of the Peace George Fisher has a little the advantage of the marriage business of Crown Point. He was appointed marriage license deputy to preside over the license bureau. Mr. Fisher wears no sign, and the happy elopers do not know he is a full-fledged justice of the peace.

But even at that, Mr. Fisher has not done so badly. He has tied together "for better, for worse, come weal or come woe" over 500 fond couples since last January.

Justice Fisher's most unique experience happened last fall. A young couple from Chicago came out in an automobile to get married. They got their license and started out the front door of the courthouse when the bride saw her very angry papa dashing down the middle of the street.

The bride and bridegroom turned and fled out of the rear door of the courthouse, and Justice Fisher put them into their automobile and got in himself to show them the road out of town. Fisher saw the fugitives and gave chase in his bubble wagon. As the elopers' machine sped along Justice Fisher talked with the young couple. The girl was over twenty, the young man was twenty-four, and Justice Fisher couldn't see why they didn't have a right to marry if they wanted to.

Married in Flying Motor Car.

"Why not get married before we catches up?" queried the gallant Mr. Fisher.

"Why, if we stop to get married, of course he'll catch us," wailed the bride. "Then do not stop," said Mr. Fisher. "Marry on the top speed."

"But who will marry us?"

"I will," said the heroic Mr. Fisher, in beautiful tenor tones.

"You?" gasped the girl. "Oh, please don't make fun of us. This is too terrible. How can you marry us?"

"By the right, dear lady," quoth the affable and always-ready-to-assist beauty-in-distress Mr. Fisher. "By the right vested in me under the laws of the sovereign State of Indiana. I am justice of the peace. I will save you."

Papa's automobile was so close that some of the things said could be plainly heard, and even the hardened chauffeur of the elopers' chariot grew shocked and horrified. Mr. Fisher stood up as well as he could in the tonneau facing the couple in the rear seat of the machine.

"Join hands," he said, simply.

"Stop!" roared papa, drawing alongside.

"You take this young woman to be your wedded wife!" said Mr. Fisher, speaking at the rate of 300 words a minute. "And you take this man to be your husband."

The machines had been obliged to come to a full stop and papa charged up and reached for his darling daughter.

But with a majestic wave of his hand right in father's face, Justice of the Peace Fisher in impressive tones said: "Then by virtue of the power vested in me by the State of Indiana, I pronounce you man and wife. Stung."

The "man and wife" part was for the bride and groom. The "stung" was for papa.

THRILLING EXPERIENCE OF AERONAUT IN CLOUDS DURING HEAVY STORM

DURING an inspection of troops by the King and Queen of Italy a short time ago, a balloon ascension took place in Rome, and almost immediately afterward, when the balloon had reached a height of only about 1,000 feet, it was struck by lightning, and, after taking fire, fell to the earth. The officer in charge, Captain Ukwell, an engineer and balloon expert, was so seriously injured by the fall of the basket that he died in a few hours.

This was the first time on record that a free balloon was struck by lightning. Captive balloons, on the other hand, have occasionally been known to serve as conductors between a cumulus cloud and the surface of the earth. This has happened several times in Rome.

For example, on November 17, 1891, a balloon sent up on Monte Mario, which had been partially hauled down on the sudden approach of a storm, was struck by lightning at the height of about 500 feet. The occupants, a cap-

tain of engineers, D'Amico, and a sergeant, escaped with comparatively slight injuries.

In the experimental trials of the German balloon sections balloons have often been struck by electrical discharges. A very exciting case of this kind occurred on May 23, 1902, at Hurlach, south of Kloster Leifeld, in the Bavarian balloon troops.

First Lieutenant Hiller, in charge of a balloon, found himself at about 6 p. m. at a height of about 2,000 feet, when a heavy black cloud appeared on the horizon, the approach of which caused the men at the telephone and the captain to experience electric shocks. The officer in charge decided to bring the balloon down to the ground as quickly as possible, but it was too late.

In the midst of the preparations to effect its descent a short, sharp thunder clap was heard, and one of the horses of the balloon wagon fell over. The lightning had struck the balloon and set the cover on fire. In a minute

the burning material fell to the ground. Lieutenant Hiller in the burning mass.

The men came to his assistance so quickly that he suffered no injury from the fire, but his left leg and his right ankle were broken and he suffered a heavy concussion. After a long siege in the hospital he recovered. Three of the men standing below were also struck and had marks on their breasts or the soles of their feet similar to the effects of small caliber bullets. They, too, recovered.

These accidents have suggested the necessity for protecting captive balloons with special lightning conductors, connecting the iron parts with the cable and leading to earth from the capstan.

It has happened that even in fair weather a flash of lightning has been discharged from a passing heavy cloud. As a rule ascensions are not made in threatening weather, and this matter would have no general interest if it were not for the fact that captive balloons now often form part of near-

ly all expositions or outdoor entertainments for the public and opportunity is generally given to make ascensions.

On these occasions, owing to the lack of proper precautions, accidents often occur. The principal societies which take an interest in and encourage this form of sport take precautions to avoid accidents, but irresponsible persons having balloons in charge are very apt to neglect them.

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Little lightning was noticed, but the thunder was continuous and loud. After about thirty minutes, judging from the barograph curves, the balloon left the region of the thunder cloud and fell at a rate of about thirty-four and a half feet a second to the earth. It alighted in the top of an old beech tree and remained there. Prof. Miethe was let down by the rope and brought people from Liepe in a wagon, and with their assistance the balloon was lowered to the ground.

Balloons have often been in curious clouds heavily charged with electricity, and sparks have been noticed on the iron ring or the writing lever of the barograph, but no effect like a lightning stroke has ever been experienced in free balloons.

It is, therefore, a question whether a balloon which may suddenly find itself in a thunder cloud can be struck by lightning. In general it may be assumed that this is impossible, since the outer surface of the balloon always takes the electrical potential of the surrounding air, consequently a flash of lightning (the equalizing of the difference of potential between two masses) cannot occur.